United Nations A/C.1/49/PV.13

General Assembly

Official Records

First Committee

13th Meeting

Friday, 4 November 1994, 10.15 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Valencia Rodriguez . . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 53-66, 68-72 and 153 *(continued)*

Consideration of draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make an announcement.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined the list of sponsors of the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/49/L.1/Rev.1: Bulgaria; L.9/Rev.1: Malaysia; L.12: Bolivia, China and Guinea; L.19: Guinea, Kenya and Malaysia; L.21: Bulgaria; and L.22: Malaysia.

The Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I call on the representative of the Netherlands, who will introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/49/L.18.

Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands): During our informal discussions earlier this week, I spoke in order to provide the Committee with some general thoughts relating to the concept of confidence-building measures and transparency in armaments. In speaking today, I return to these issues by focusing on transparency in armaments and, more particularly, of the Register of Conventional Arms.

This subject has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for a number of years. After the Register of Conventional Arms was established pursuant to resolution 46/36 L, it enjoyed consensus in the succeeding years, as is reflected in resolutions 47/52 L and 48/75 E. The Register is now a widely accepted confidence-building measure aimed at promoting openness, trust and greater stability among nations by providing the international community with official data on the international transfers of seven categories of conventional arms. The first report of the Secretary-General (A/48/344), with the replies of Member States on their imports and exports of the conventional weapons concerned, appeared on 11 October 1993, listing 80 returns to the Register. Since that report appeared, 10 more Member States have filed data for the Register, so that in total 90 States have provided answers for the year 1992.

On 1 September 1994, the report contained in document A/49/352 appeared, listing 81 returns of Member States to the Register for the year 1993. On the basis of the experience of last year, the total number of returns for 1993 can be expected eventually to reach more or less the same level as that of 1992.

This year, a group of governmental experts was convened to assist the Secretary-General in preparing a report on the continuing operation of the Register and on its further development. The group met three times under the chairmanship of my predecessor, Ambassador Wagenmakers, and unanimously approved a report, although one delegation reserved its position on it. This report, contained in document A/49/316, appeared on 22 September 1994. In his foreword to the report, the Secretary-General welcomed the Register, pointing out its relevance for confidence-building with the following words:

94-86905 (E)

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> "As part of a larger international effort to promote openness and transparency in military matters, the Register contributes to confidence-building and security among States". (*A/49/316, foreword*)

The assessment of the first two years of the Register's operation is positive. The level of participation is encouraging. Although the number of replies is a little less than half the membership of the United Nations, the returns for 1992 and 1993 covered the bulk of the international arms trade in the seven weapon categories concerned. Nevertheless, participation in the Register could and should be improved, as was also observed by the Secretary-General in his foreword to the 1994 report of the group of governmental experts.

Wider participation, especially in certain regions and subregions, is of paramount importance for the further consolidation of the Register. It is important also that Member States that have neither imported nor exported weapons should also inform the Secretary-General of that fact, because those so-called "nil" reports show that no arms have been transferred, which in itself should promote confidence. It indicates moreover that the Member State concerned is willing to participate in this confidence-building exercise.

As far as expansion of the scope of the Register is concerned, the 1994 group of governmental experts reaffirmed the goal of early expansion of the Register by the inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production, but could not reach agreement on including such data on the same basis as that applying to transfers. A growing number of States agree that the Register would become more complete and useful if it covered military holdings and procurement from national production. This means that not only the continuing operation but also the possible further development of the Register will have to remain subject to review.

I have the honour today to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Transparency in armaments", document A/C.1/49/L.18, on behalf of the following sponsors: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

Thus, I am happy to say that over one third of the United Nations membership has put its weight behind the present draft resolution.

Allow me to explain briefly the main features and purpose of draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.18. The draft resolution is in essence a procedural one aimed at maintaining the momentum of the Register of Conventional Arms and encouraging wider participation in it. It reaffirms the determination of the international community to ensure the effective operation of the Register and, as was the case in the two preceding years, calls upon Member States to provide the requested data by 30 April each year. Draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.18 furthermore takes note of the report of the 1994 group of governmental experts and requests the Secretary-General to make provision for future review of the operation of the Register and its further development by convening another group of governmental experts in 1996. The Conference on Disarmament is encouraged to continue its work on the issue of transparency in armaments.

The Netherlands delegation is aware of the fact that some delegations in this room do not consider further work on this subject necessary or opportune because discussions this year in the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments of the Conference on Disarmament did not, in their view, produce tangible results. May I submit that this is precisely why work in Geneva should in fact continue: both the Register and the work in the Conference on Disarmament are a mere two years old, and experience has shown that multilateral disarmament efforts need time to mature.

With the present draft resolution, the sponsors are aiming to maintain the consensus similar draft resolutions have acquired in years past. I am encouraged by the broad support, expressed during both the general debate and our informal, structured discussions, for the concept of transparency in armaments as embodied in the Register of Conventional Arms. Draft resolution L.18 should, in my view, be acceptable to all delegations, and in the days to come my delegation will seek to confirm that this is indeed the case.

Mr. Boytha (Hungary): On this occasion, I should like to address the issue of transparency in armaments in the context of two relevant draft resolutions, both of which Hungary is sponsoring. One of the drafts, in document A/C.1/49/L.18, concerns the operation and further development of the Register of Conventional Arms and also the continuation of the work on transparency in armaments being carried out within the Conference on Disarmament framework. The other, A/C.1/49/L.27, is devoted to the establishment of a code of conduct for the international transfers of conventional weapons.

It has become a commonplace that the process of post-cold-war transition to a new world order has confronted the international community with new types of major armed conflicts around the world. Such largely intra-State wars have engaged not only States, but also the United Nations and other competent international organizations in searching for solutions to this new problem and in conducting peace-keeping operations at an increasing number of locations.

The enormous difficulties of restoring peace and putting an end to fighting, aggression, shelling, armed atrocities, ethnic cleansing and destruction have become obvious in recent years. The idea of preventive diplomacy and of developing security and confidence-building measures has emerged and it has become indispensable to consider the lessons of the armed conflicts now being waged in order to prevent their further proliferation.

Because the wars in question have been fought in most cases not simply with rifles but with battle tanks, armoured vehicles, mortars and cannons, the idea of preventing armed conflicts also implies developing transparency in these categories of weaponry as a confidence-building factor likely to foster restraint in military production and the transfer of arms. The drive for transparency resulted in the Register of Conventional Arms, a child of the efforts towards arms control; the Register came into effect as recently as 1992, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, adopted in 1991, which requested the Conference on Disarmament, under the heading "Transparency in armaments", to address the question of the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production. The General Assembly also requested the Conference to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field, and also in respect of the transfer of high technology with military applications and weapons of mass destruction. This request was renewed in 1992 and again in 1993.

Accordingly, the Conference on Disarmament has been dealing with the question of transparency in armaments since 1992, and in 1993 and 1994 it established a special Ad Hoc Committee to this end. I had the honour to serve as Chairman of that Committee this year. Of course, it was not to be expected that the manifold and complex task set out by the General Assembly would be accomplished by the Conference on Disarmament in such a short time. But neither was it to be presumed that after only three years would there no longer be any need for transparency in armaments. Three years — indeed, actually only two — of operation of both the Register and the Conference on Disarmament are but a very short initial phase when compared to the enormous challenges raised by the unsettled armed conflicts still raging in very many places and forever erupting in new ones too. Our options are far from exhausted though, and we must continue our work to enhance confidence and ease tensions. The assessment of the first two years of the Register's operation and the report of the Conference on Disarmament on its work in the field of transparency in armaments (A/49/27, section III, subsection H) justify the continuation of the efforts involved.

In his report on the Register (A/49/352) the Secretary-General also revealed some shortcomings in its operations and made specific proposals to promote its universality. His points should be further developed by the experts in New York. Moreover, the findings and suggestions of the Secretary-General offer fresh ammunition for the work of the Conference on Disarmament on transparency in armaments.

During the past three years, an increasing number of States have submitted background information for the Register on their military holdings and also on their procurements from national production. This suggests the possibility of making provision for proper, specific rubrics for this purpose. To do so, however, would require interpretations that were generally accepted by the nations involved. It can be seen from the relevant passage in the 1994 report of the Conference on Disarmament that an agreement did seem to crystallize in the Conference concerning the need to develop pertinent definitions, and it seems worthwhile for there to be further elaboration of the divergent views on this subject. Such continued discussion might also contribute to clarifying questions relating, *inter alia*, to the classification of licensed or collaborative production.

The Secretary-General goes on to point out mismatches and discrepancies in submissions to the Register, possibly resulting from conflicting interpretations as to whether or not — and, if it did, when - a particular transfer occurred. He deemed it appropriate for such discrepancies to be sorted out through bilateral discussions and for the outcomes to be reported to him. These are all questions that could well be handled under a code of conduct for international transfers of conventional arms. The need for such a code has also been raised in the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments of the Conference on Disarmament. Discussions have already started on whether such a code is feasible. The code's possible content should be further examined, even if most participants find it premature to be drafting it so soon.

The 1994 report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly shows that there has been progress in the work towards increasing transparency in armaments in other respects also. I refer, as an example, to the issue of weapons of mass destruction and the transfer of high technology with military applications, where opposing views were set out in more depth than they had been at previous sessions. Delegations that opposed the inclusion of weapons of mass destruction in the Register of Conventional Arms did not, however, rule out further consideration of transparency measures for such weapons on the basis of specific and substantial proposals. In compliance with the General Assembly's call upon all Member States to cooperate at regional and subregional levels with a view to enhancing increased openness and transparency in armaments, this aspect too was discussed in the Conference on Disarmament, and it deserves to have continued work done on it.

Moreover, in the light of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, there still seems to be room for discussing ways and means of viewing the organizations, structures and sizes of armed forces. Approaches to this subject differed greatly, but the relevant passages of the report reflect the fact that, in one way or another, pretty much all participants found information on military personnel to be relevant to the matter in hand.

We should not be discouraged by the mere fact that during the first three years of the Register and of the work in the Conference on Disarmament on issues related to transparency in armaments it has been impossible to reach the goals in question. It was clearly stated in the report of the Conference on Disarmament, adopted by consensus, that several new aspects had been raised with respect to transparency in the field of armaments and that a considerable number of the topics referred to in previous reports had led to further developments in the positions of States and groups of States and also to the clarification and further development of previously presented ideas. Although agreement on those topics had not been reached, some progress in our understanding of the issues was recognized.

The harsh realities of the savage armed conflicts now going on in various parts of the globe oblige us also to continue our work in the field of confidence-building and increasing openness in arms transfers. I wish to stress in this context that, for the time being, the only item referring to questions of conventional arms on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament is that on transparency in armaments. I wish to recall that the topic of conventional weapons figures on the list of subjects suggested by the General Assembly in 1979, and that it should not be neglected today either.

In conclusion, let me express the hope that the draft resolutions concerning the Register, the continuation of the work of the Conference on Disarmament in the field of transparency in armaments and other, specific proposals aimed at furthering the relevant efforts, will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call next on the representative of Brazil, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.29.

Mr. Jaguaribe (Brazil): I am speaking on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.29. I wish to introduce that draft resolution, which relates to agenda item 55, and is entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields". The draft resolution is sponsored by a number of States from several regions.

As is well know, Canada and Brazil, together with other delegations, have in recent years joined efforts in this undertaking with a view to arriving at universally acceptable norms and guidelines in this area. The relevance of this issue can be seen in its continuing recurrence in all multilateral efforts relating to disarmament and non-proliferation. That is understandable inasmuch as science and technology have a direct bearing on social and economic development as well as on international security and disarmament. The basic assumption guiding our efforts has always been that scientific and technological achievements should be used for the benefit of all mankind to promote the sustainable economic and social

development of all States and to safeguard international security, and that international cooperation in the use of science and technology, through the transfer and exchange of technological know-how for peaceful purposes, should be promoted.

We are convinced that, given the global nature of the issues involved, this question can be adequately and fully addressed only in the context of a broad, multilateral understanding. In this regard, the basic purpose of this year's draft resolution is to keep the General Assembly seized of the issue whilst reaffirming the need for a mutually reinforcing relationship between developmental and security needs.

The draft resolution relies on simple and clear concepts. The sponsors are hopeful that it can command consensus support.

The Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish):* I call on the representative of Canada, who will continue the introduction of draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.29.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): Canada is once again pleased to be able to introduce, in conjunction with our colleagues from Brazil, a draft resolution (A/C.1/49/L.29) on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

As members know, this issue has been the subject of debate in the Disarmament Commission over the past several years. During that time, much progress has been made in clarifying positions, identifying common understandings and bridging differences. Unfortunately, in the end, the Disarmament Commission's rules of procedure intervened and the item had to be dropped before consensus on all aspects of the issue had been achieved.

The purpose of this draft resolution is to ensure that debate on these issues continues. Although consensus has not yet been achieved on texts dealing with particular aspects of those issues, there is surely consensus on the fact that they are of vital importance. They arise time and again in relation to non-proliferation measures — and, further, they involve profound questions about our common maturity, about our foresight, and about our restraint in containing and channelling our scientific and technological prowess in the service of enduring international security. For these reasons, Canada would like to see the Disarmament Commission take this question up again as an agenda item.

The draft resolution we have submitted to the Committee for its consideration affirms broad principles that we believe can command consensus. The essential elements of the draft resolution are as follows: science and technology *per se* are deemed to be neutral, and their application for peaceful purposes should be promoted; the international transfer of high-technology products, services and expertise for peaceful purposes is essential for the economic and social welfare of all nations; to the extent possible, and bearing in mind the legitimate security needs of States, every effort should be made to devote scientific and technological developments to economic and social advancement; the application of science and technology should be promoted in disarmament procedures and techniques; the international transfer of high technology is facilitated by States' commitments to global non-proliferation norms; and multilateral dialogue is required to promote international cooperation in the transfer of high technology and to strengthen confidence and security among States.

Disagreement on this issue arises most often in relation to the transfer of technology. We must address this question bearing in mind that the right of access to technology is not unlimited. Access to dual-use technology entails concurrent responsibility to ensure that it is not diverted to non-civilian uses. This is most easily facilitated through States' adherence to global, verifiable non-proliferation norms.

Finally, this is not essentially a North-South issue. In the real world, many nations, including Canada and Brazil, are both technology exporters and technology importers. All States have, on the one hand, a commercial and developmental interest in ensuring the greatest possible flows of technology and, on the other hand, a security interest in seeing that this technology is devoted solely to peaceful purposes. We encourage all delegations to consider this draft resolution in that light.

Mr. Starr (Australia): Australia would like to endorse the introductions by Brazil and Canada of draft resolution L.29, on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields. The draft resolution represents an important and, in our view, essential follow-up to the efforts on this agenda item in the Disarmament Commission.

Australia's sponsorship of the draft resolution reflects our commitment to the dual objectives of promoting the application of science and technology for peaceful purposes while furthering our shared non-proliferation goals through

the implementation of national measures that seek to ensure that transfers of science and technology are not misused and do not undermine international peace and security.

The Chairman *(interpretation from Spanish):* I now call on the representative of New Zealand, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.22.

Mr. Keating (New Zealand): It is with great pleasure that I introduce today a draft resolution (A/C.1/49/L.22) promoting the conclusion of negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. New Zealand has worked once again in partnership with Mexico and Australia on this text, and I thank them for their valuable support.

The draft resolution also has the support of the following countries, which have joined as sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey and Venezuela.

For well over two decades, including during a period when an atmospheric nuclear-testing programme was being conducted in our region, New Zealand has vigorously opposed nuclear testing. We have, in cooperation with others, been bringing this issue before the First Committee for many years. At the last session of the General Assembly, the entire international community supported, for the first time, the commencement of multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty, when it adopted resolution 48/70. That decision was an important demonstration of the existence of the political will that is essential for the successful launch of negotiations.

This year's draft text builds on last year's ground-breaking resolution. It also contains some new elements to take account of new circumstances. The Conference is in the middle of live negotiations, and there are high expectations that it will produce the text of an effective treaty without delay.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are committed to the earliest possible conclusion of negotiations. We believe that this goal is widely shared by United Nations Members. In the many consultations we have held on this draft resolution over the past several weeks, however, it has become clear to us that, while many favour reference to a firm time-frame for the negotiations, others cannot accept a deadline. We have therefore sought to convey in the draft resolution the high priority the international community attaches to the negotiations and a sufficient sense of a commitment to their conclusion. We have striven to find a balance that will attract the broadest possible backing for the message that the General Assembly wishes to send to the participants in the negotiations. We believe that the text before the Committee represents a fair balance, and that it should command the same support as last year's text.

Specifically, the resolution welcomes the preparation of a rolling text in the Conference's Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, and the positive and substantial contributions made by States participating in the negotiations. Secondly, it encourages participants to make substantial progress in the period of inter-sessional work agreed to by the Conference. Thirdly, it urges rapid progress towards the conclusion of the negotiations by urging all States participating in the Conference, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to negotiate intensively, as a high priority task, and to conclude an effective treaty.

Given the priority attached to this treaty, it is self-evident that the General Assembly should stand ready to adopt the text as soon as it is completed by the Conference on Disarmament. The draft resolution carries over from last year the message that the exercise of the utmost restraint in respect of nuclear testing would be consistent with the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It also shows appreciation for the suspension of testing by a number of nuclear-weapon States.

New Zealand has a strong wish to see the current negotiations concluded so that the international community can receive the long-awaited disarmament and non-proliferation benefits of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We therefore urge all members of the Committee to support this year's draft resolution when the time comes for its adoption.

Mr. Marín-Bosch (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of New Zealand has just introduced to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.22 on an item of particular importance to the

international community in the area of nuclear disarmament: a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My delegation thanks Ambassador Colin Keating and endorses his statement.

Since 1992, together with New Zealand and Australia, Mexico has prepared the first drafts of texts that we submitted to the group of countries that have sponsored one of the two draft resolutions that had been coming before this Committee for many years. A few years ago, we managed to reach agreement on a single text. Today, it is difficult to distinguish between those who used to support one draft and those who used to support the other. We are all now of the same view, though there are some nuances remaining in the individual positions of the sponsors. What is important is that the First Committee should express as clearly as possible its support for the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations.

Of course, my delegation would have preferred language that better reflects the wishes of the overwhelming majority of States represented here. That language would have set a deadline for the conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We know that, in this connection, the nuclear-weapon States do not have one single position Some, like us, wish to step up the pace and conclude the treaty as soon as possible. Others have a different approach. This explains the language in paragraphs 4 and 5. It should be mentioned, however, that if the Conference on Disarmament concludes its work before the next session of the General Assembly, the text of a comprehensive test-ban treaty could be considered immediately by the Assembly. This explains the very modest suggestion in paragraph 7, namely, that the General Assembly:

> "*Declares* its readiness to resume consideration of this item, as necessary, before its fiftieth session in order to endorse a text of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty".

We are persuaded that the text of draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.22 reflects an acceptable balance between the aspirations of the broad majority of countries and the position held by others regarding the pace of the work on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We therefore feel confident that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Starr (Australia): I am pleased to be able to join today with New Zealand and Mexico in introducing draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.22, which is designed to underpin and support the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty being conducted in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

For many years, Australia has given high priority in its national arms control and disarmament agenda to the initiation of negotiations towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Over the past year, we have laboured to take full advantage of the negotiating mandate agreed for the negotiations and of the historic opportunity provided by their commencement in 1994.

We now wish to promote and advance the negotiations towards the earliest possible agreement on a text. We believe that a clear expression of the broad indeed universal support in the international community for the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty is of great importance. It would provide an unequivocal underpinning for the multilateral achievement of our common goal through an orderly but expeditious negotiating process.

Of course, in seeking to express the broadest possible support for any important goal of the international community, it is necessary to draw together a range of opinions on how to reach the target. Though there is a shared and common purpose amongst States on the negotiations, it is apparent that expression of that collective purpose in a single formulation can probably never be entirely comfortable for all participants in the resulting consensus.

We firmly believe that an achievement-oriented international community must operate on the basis of such understanding, compromise and determination if interests we have in common are to be advanced.

I should like once again to endorse the draft resolution, and commend its balanced and progressive language to delegations. We trust that its adoption by consensus will provide the firmest possible foundation for the initiation at Geneva of the new phase of negotiations, which my delegation hopes will be able to resolve outstanding issues and finalize the treaty without delay.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.